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Impact of Internet Blockade Post Abrogation of Article 370 of Indian Constitution on Doctoral Students Pursuing Research in Kashmir

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Abstract

This paper aims to gauge the impact of internet blockade on the research students pursuing research in Kashmir post abrogation of article 370 of Indian constitution that granted political autonomy to erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir. In order to collect the data survey method was employed. A close-ended questionnaire was distributed among the select group. The data for the study was gathered from these questionnaires as per the objectives was analysed and interpreted to reach logical conclusions. The study revealed that the majority (76.92%) of researchers are of the view that the internet is a backbone for education and research. In the absence of the internet facility, the majority of research students (74.04%) were not able to pursue their research, while the research work of 61.54% was extremely hampered by 76-100%. It was also observed that the majority of researchers (78.85%) failed to complete their research in a set timeline, thereby hampering their academic growth. Majority of the research students (77.88%) failed to access the internet in e-kiosks setup by the administration due to the huge rush outside these centres while 42.31% migrated to mainland India avail internet facility. The study also explored the information seeking pattern of respondents before the internet blockade and it was observed that the majority of scholars (80.77%) consulted both print and online sources of information before the blockade. The researchers also claimed that resources of the library are not current and comprehensive.

The study can be a good starting point for the researchers to understand how people cope with limited information sources, in the absence of the internet. It will also be beneficial for the information scientists in making plans and strategies for tackling such e-crises in the future.

The study does not claim to be the final word in this matter as respondents were limited to only one university though university under study is the oldest and major source of imparting higher education in Kashmir valley.

Keywords *– Internet blockade, Internet services, e-crisis, e-sources, Research student, Research, Information seeking pattern.*

Introduction

The internet has revolutionized human lives completely, particularly their communications capabilities. The Internet has become the major mechanism for information dissemination in

present times. It is expanding with each passing day, in terms of its resources and users. Simultaneously, the active efforts of government of nations different to curb the internet indicates that the "democratic potential of the internet is being dumbed down'' **(Gomez, 2004)**. These restrictions and controls on internet content by laws, censorship, and blockade methods are usually enforced for certain reasons such as "political, social, commercial, national security, and cultural interests''**(Subramanian, 2011 & Giles, 2009)**.

There has been an internet blockade in Kashmir valley from time to time. But the people of Kashmir observed the longest ever internet blockade of 213 days in the world from 4th August 2019 and ended on 4th March 2020 **(Malik, 2019a)**. The highest number of internet blackouts has seen in Kashmir between 2012, and 2017 succeeded by Rajasthan, Haryana, and Gujarat **(Kathuria, Kedia, Varma, Bagchi & Sekhani, 2018)**. The internet was suspended in Kashmir on the intervening night of 4 August, 2019. The Indian government revoked Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) state's special status under Article 370, and also Article 35A on August 5, 2019. The state was divided into two union territories of J&K and Ladakh **(Internet Shutdown Tracker, n.d)**. To avoid agitation over the decision especially in Kashmir, the government imposed curfew, curbed communication systems including internet, cable TV, landlines & mobile services, and all educational institutions were closed. **(Press Trust of India, 2019)**. The freedom of speech & expression and freedom of conducting business over the internet is protected by the constitution of India. The constitution safeguards internet access as a fundamental right under Article 19, so blocking of the internet means violating fundamental human rights **(Review curb on internet, 2020).**

The internet blockade affects every nook and corner of the society especially the Business and Education sectors of Kashmir. The internet suspension hits government employees and business persons in submitting their Income Tax, and Goods & Services Tax (GST) returns. The e-tendering halts in Kashmir which has a direct effect on the development process. Individuals could not apply for driving licenses, and transporters are incapable to submit vehicle fitness and insurance fee online **(Malik, 2019b).** The Kashmir train passengers are unable to check online local train timing through the National Train Information Enquiry System (NTIES) **(Malik, 2019c)**. The numerous services offered by the postal department are affected by internet lockdown like "booking of registered letters, parcel and value payable articles, money orders, insurance schemes, speed post articles, saving bank and cash certificates, telephone billing, money transfer, and much more" **(Naqushbandi, 2019a).** The banking operations also hit severely, the utility bills which people pay online are now paid in their respective branches resulting in long queues **("No world on resumption", 2019)**.

Internet ban affects the healthcare sector badly as the patients of Post Stress Trauma Disorder (PSTD) and other mental disorders can't take online counselling. The patients are unable to check online reports of their pathology samples that are dispatched outside the state for examination. In Kashmir hospitals, most of the patient data remain undigitized. The doctors cannot acquire new knowledge and update themselves **(Kathuria, Kedia, Varma, Bagchi & Sekhani, 2018)**. The online medical aid groups like Save the Heart and J&K Blood donors have been rendered defunct **(Salam, 2019a)**. The poor patients of Kashmir cannot take advantage of free treatment under the Ayushman Bharat healthcare scheme works on the internet **(Naqushbandi, 2019b)**.

The political uncertainty, frequent strikes, and suspension of internet services in Kashmir led to shut-off of all private sectors and businesses which ultimately shattered Kashmir's economy. Daily Kashmir's economy lost around Rs. 165 crore and one lakh people rendered jobless. Without the internet, the overall industrial production brings down by 70 percent **(Akmali, 2019)** and the export of certain sectors i.e., horticulture, handicrafts, and Kashmir bat industry plunged by 50-60 percent **(Malik, 2019a)**. The tourism sector is considered as the main catalyst for Kashmir's economy recorded the lowest number of tourists i.e. 36,105 in the valley from August to November 2019 as compared to the last five years for the same period **(Yaqoob, 2019)**. E-commerce suffered due to an internet bar. In pre-internet blockade, Kashmir received around 3000-5000 online shopping products per day **(Malik, 2019d)**. E-commerce owners use different platforms like social media and other websites for their trade. These websites disappeared from the internet due to the non-payment of the annual registration fee **(Salam, 2019 b)**.

Internet gag collapsed education and research in Kashmir. Students have to wait long outside the established internet kiosks due to lack of internet facilities. The scholars of Kashmir were neither able to access scholarly literature nor able to apply online for national and international conferences. They were also not able to apply for fellowships and submit their research papers to journals. However, some scholars managed to migrate in order to proceed and complete their research in set time but every scholar cannot afford to go to other places just for internet access **(Maqbool, 2019)**. The e-libraries resources of universities and colleges are inaccessible amid internet lockdown hampered research and studies of students **(Salam, 2020)**.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Governments, around the globe, have dynamic control over the internet usage by their citizens via censor and block web content. Every nation has formulated some policies and incorporated

certain laws accordingly to keep the check on internet usage by their citizens. This can be attributed to the fact that the internet provides access to a tremendous amount of information which may contain moral as well as immoral content. In the UAE, the popular social site i.e., Orkut is unavailable **(Riyasbabu, 2007; Ghosh, 2016)**. BBC Persian, the site is suspended in Iran as a part of their internet censorship policy **(BBC News, 2006; Cozens, 2006; Tajdin, 2019)**. It is mandatory to install hidden cameras in internet cafes of Saudi Arabia and provide footage along with the name of the customers to the government **(Noman, 2009, Rahal, 2010)**. Also, the websites appertaining freedom of speech and women's rights are blocked in Saudi Arabia **(Giles, 2009)**. Similarly, the Vietnam authority had blocked foreign news, human rights institutes, politically, and morally hazardous sites. It is unlawful to use the internet to breach the law, an anti-political party, against the nation's security and sovereignty. The violators are jailed for some years **(Human Rights Watch, 2019).** Immoral and against national sovereignty sites are blocked in South Korea and it was probably the first country to pass internet censorship laws. It is considered illegal to communicate and show pity towards North Korea over the internet **(Ang, 1997)**. Turkey's authority blocks and censor websites built on nine catalogue crimes i.e., "incitement to suicide, child pornography, facilitation of the use of narcotics, provision of substances harmful to the health, obscenity, prostitution, facilitation of gambling, the crimes against Atatürk, and betting/gambling"**(Akdeniz, 2010; Yurtsever, 2019**). The country also banned the news and posts related to corruption of eminent political officers **(Akgul & Kırlıdog, 2015; U.S. Mission Turkey, 2020)**.

At times the internet censorship is used by governments to suppress the opposition parties' support or control the anti-government protests by the locals like the sites of opposed political parties and bloggers are suspended in Ethiopia **(OpenNet Initiative, 2009).** China was the worst abuser of internet freedom and acquired "Not Free" status in 2020. Internet censorship and blockades impede economic development and research scientific output of china **(Balding, 2017; Bulman, 2017**). The Chinese government curbs the citizen's freedom of expression on the internet by using numerous methods viz. imposed laws, imprisonment, clampdown internet cafes, blocks various foreign news and social media sites **(China Shuts Down, 2017**). Likewise, authorities block sites of political areas and news reports of sensitive topics like Tibet protests in 2008 and Taiwan relations **(Bulman, 2017; Congressional Research Service, 2011; Giles, 2009**). MSN Spaces, Microsoft's blog site for Chinese people, blocked contents under title democracy, freedom and human rights **(Congressional Research Service, 2012; Waters, 2008**).

The Myanmar citizens held protests and demonstrations against the sharp hike in fuel price on August 19, 2007. The military forces killed over 200 people on September 26 and the government suspended the internet on 29 September was precipitated to disarm and immobilize the citizens that share updates, photographs and videos documenting the violent suppression of protests by Myanmar military rulers with the rest of the world. The internet blockade lasted until October 4, 2007 **(Chowdhury, 2008; Human Rights Watch, 2007; Wang, 2007)**. Similarly, the activists in Egypt call for protest against unemployment, poverty, corruption and three- decade ruler Hosni Mubarak. The Egyptian government ordered all service providers to cut-off internet connections with the rest of the world on January 28, 2011 because of extensive pro-democracy and anti-government protests in Egypt **(Aljazeera, 2011; BBC, 2011; Fahim & El-Naggar, 2011)**.

The internet shutdown was documented in 33 countries with 213 incidents across the globe in 2019. India with 121 incidents of internet shutdowns tops the list of worst internet shutdown offenders followed by Venezuela (12) and Yemen (11) **(Taye, 2019)**. According to **Woodhams and Migliano (2020)** report, the world experienced the highest internet shutdown cases than ever before with 122 major incidents in 21 countries during 2019. The global economy lost around $8.5 BN by all major internet shutdowns, and also shows a 235% rise as compared to $2.4 BN in 2015-16. Iran's economy (2319.5M) hit badly with shutdowns followed by Sudan (1866.3M) and India (1329.8M). The Mauritania government blocked the internet for one week on 25 June due to disputed Presidential elections **(Human Rights Watch, 2019; Shaban, 2019)**.

In Sudan, social media was blocked for 68 days that ended on 26 Feb 2019 and again on April 7. These blocks were implemented because of the intensive protests and demonstrations that demand to step down the long-term president of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir. The media access was restored after Omar al-Bashir stepped down by the pressure of top military generals **(Dahir, 2019; Zisengwe, 2019)**. Due to military coup, the protests continued in Sudan, the internet was suspended on Jun 3 to prevent the flow of information related to the killing of innocent citizens and brutality **(Aljazeera, 2019; BBC, 2019; Human Rights Watch, 2019)**. The suspension and protests continued until the establishment of a new government at the starting of August **(Aljazeera, 2019; Woodhams & Migliano, 2020)**. The government suspended the internet for a week, to suppress anti-government protests that erupted in Iraq due to poor public services, corruption and unemployment begin on October 1 **(Alkhshali, Tawfeeq & Qiblawi; 2019; Baqal & Karaalp, 2019; Mansour, 2019)**. The citizens of Iran held protests against a rise in the petrol price by around 50% in November leading to internet blockade **(BBC, 2019; Welle,**

2020; Wintour, 2019). The country Chad witnessed the longest suspension of social networking sites from March 2018 to July 2019. This happened when the parliament of Chad suggested constitutional modifications that allow President Idriss Deby to stay in power till 2033 **(Christian, 2019; Dahir, 2019; Kulkarni, 2019)**. Zimbabwe authority more than doubled the fuel prices and to maintain law and order situation it imposed the internet blockade on January 15, 16 and 18 **(Bright, 2019; Koch, 2019; Taye, 2019)**. Internet and SMS services blocked in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for 20 days afore election result **(Aljazeera, 2019; BBC, 2018).** The authority of Sri Lanka blocked social sites to prevent the spread of rumours and disinformation, after a series of bomb blasts in churches and hotels on April 21 **(Fisher, 2019; Ellis-Petersen, 2019; Wakefield, 2019)**.

Internet surveillance, censorship and blockades took roots in India after two terrorist attacks in Mumbai in July 2006 and November 2008 where terrorists used internet platforms from planning to execution of attacks **(Lordet, 2012; Murthy, as cited in Ramesh, 2011)**. Immediately after the 2008 attack, the Information Technology Amendment Act 2008 was passed in December 2008. The state and central governments of India are responsible for censor and block internet contents **(Faleiro, 2014; Naavi.org, n.d; Reich, 2012)**. In India, the frequent internet suspension in the name of maintaining peace and harmony was condemned by the UN and considered it as a human rights violation **(Goel, Singh & Yasir, 2019; Kamdar, 2019; Krishnani, 2019; Singh, 2019).** Also, India tops in internet shutdowns with 121 incidents out of 213 documented shutdowns worldwide in 2019 **(Taye, 2019)** and 47% shutdowns occurred in Jammu and Kashmir region, according to a recent study done at Stanford University **(Flamini, 2019).** India received "Partly Free" internet freedom status which is unchanged since 2009 **(Shahbaz & Funk, 2019)**. From 2012 to 2017, India's economy cost $3.4 billion approximately due to internet blackouts **(Kathuria, Kedia, Varma, Bagchi & Sekhani, 2018)**. But the earliest case of Internet blocking is traced in July 1999 during the Kargil war with an attempt to block the online edition of the Pakistani newspaper Dawn by VSNL, although this was an unsuccessful attempt **(Subramanian, 2011)**. On 5 December 2011, Indian government issued advisory to pre-screen and delete "disparaging, inflammatory or defamatory content" before making it accessible on net to social media and other internet companies like Facebook, Yahoo, Google and Microsoft. The decision was taken when offensive content was put online against "Congress leader Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh" **(Arya, 2011; Burke, 2011; Timmons, 2011; The Economic Times, 2011)**. The Mobile data, group SMS and MMS services suspended in Vadodara district of Gujarat for 3 days on September 27, 2014 in response to communal clashes between two communities. The unrests began "when a man

identified as Sunil Rajput posted on Facebook a photo shopped image of a Hindu goddess superimposed on an image of the Muslim holy city of Mecca" **(Langa & Rajendran, 2014; The Economic Times, 2014; The Times of India, 2014; Zee news, 2014)**. Protests erupted in Nagaland over the government's decision to provide 33% reservation to women in 12 towns across the state in urban local body elections and the tribal organisations demanded the chief minister Zeliang to step down. To prevent violence, mobile services like SMS and internet were suspended in the state for 20 days which began on 30 January, 2017 **(Das, 2017; Deka, 2017; Financial Express, 2017; Pia, 2017; Singh, 2017)**. The Manipur government suspend mobile internet and SMS services on 1 September 2015 for one week due to agitation over the passing of three Bills –the Protection of Manipur Peoples Bill, 2015, the Manipur Land Revenues & Land Reforms (7th Amendment) Bill, 2015 and the Manipur Shop & Establishment (2nd Amendment) Bill, 2015. The laws are proposed to restrict residency and land ownership rights of non-Manipuris in the state **("All three Bills", 2015; Gurumayum, 2015; Fowler, 2015; Pandey, 2015)**. The District Magistrate of Manipur issued Orders to all telecom operators to disconnect mobile data services in East and West Imphal from 18th December to 30th December, 2016. Such preventive steps were taken to maintain law and order situation caused due to economic blockade imposed by the United Naga Council (UNC).The blockade was implemented on 1 November and lasts for 139 days, as a protest against the government's decision to create two districts in Manipur **(HuffPost, 2017; "Mobile Internet blocked", 2016; sflc.in, 2018)**. Internet services were also blocked in Asanol and Raniganj areas of West Bengal for a week on 28th March 2018 when clashes erupt between two different religious groups over a Ram Navami procession **(Firstpost, 2018; Kolkata 24x7, 2018; New Indian Express, 2018)**.The Madhya Pradesh farmer's demanding higher rates for their produce and waiver of agricultural loans. The Internet suspended in Madhya Pradesh when the farmer's agitation turned violent on 6th June, 2017 and restored on 11th June, 2017 **(Chauhan, 2017; GardaWorld,2017; NDTV, 2018; Outlook, 2017)**.The Jat community started agitations on 29 January which demanded reservation in government jobs, educational institutions, and among other things .In order to prevent spread of rumours mobile Internet and bulk messaging services were suspended on 17th February, 2017 in many "sensitive" districts of Haryana and were reportedly restored on 19th February, 2017 **(Financial Express, 2017; Firstpost, 2017; The Economic Times, 2017;)**. Country-wide protests and violence reported in India especially in the North eastern states against the CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) which was passed on December 11, 2019 in the Parliament. To maintain law and order situation, the government decided to lockdown internet services in unrest places **(Sathe, 2019;**

Subramaniam, 2019). Mobile data, SMS and voice services were suspended in parts of Delhi for the first time over protests against CAA on December 19 from 9 am to 1 pm **(Dixit, 2019; India Today, 2019)**. The Internet was restored in Assam after 10 days on 20th December due to constant protests over CAA **(Benu, 2019; Jalan, 2020; The Week, 2019)**. Internet connection was cut off between November 8-10 in various parts of the country before Supreme Court decision in November 9, 2019 on Ayodhya land dispute case between Hindus and Muslims for over 70 years **("Ahead of Ayodhya verdict", 2019; Jalan, 2019; News18, 2019)**. The 22 social networking sites banned in Kashmir for a period of one month issued by the government of J&K on 26 April 2017 after a series of videos on social networks which shows abuse of Kashmiris by Indian forces amid protests and clashes with security forces. The decision was taken to maintain peace and harmony **(BBC, 2017;Das, 2017; Telegraph, 2017)**. There has been long suspension of internet services in few areas that include the district Kargil of Ladakh where 145 days 145 days were observed which was imposed in the wake of abrogation of Article 370 on 5 August 2019 **(India Today, 2019; The week, 2019; Scroll.in, 2019)**. Also in 2016, the Internet was suspended for 133 days in Kashmir from 8th July 2016 to 19th November 2016, in order to quash the protests caused over the killing of Burhan Wani **(BBC, 2020; Khatri, 2019; Majid, 2019; Yaqoob, 2016)**. Darjeeling witnessed 100 days internet suspension from 18th June 2017 to 25th September 2017 against the backdrop of protests demanding separate Gorkhaland **(Mehrotra, 2019; Medianama, 2018)**. But the longest ever internet lockdowns was observed by Kashmir where the Internet of all platforms was suspended on 4th August 2019 as a precautionary measure in the wake of the withdrawal of Article 370. The 2G mobile internet restored on 25th January to access white listed sites and social media remained banned **(Al Jazeera, 2020; Gulf News, 2020; The Economic Times, 2020)** and fully restored after 213 days **(Internet Shutdown Tracker, n.d)**.

Statement of the problem

The internet has become a great invention in the 21st-century world. The internet eradicates the communication gap irrespective of geographical barriers, which help researchers to share their research literature with the rest of the world. Apart from the research literature, e-journals, e-books, e-databases, and e-theses/dissertations are easily accessible for the scholar community on the internet. Sans internet, researchers cannot access online resources for conducting their research smoothly. The present study was carried out to portray the impact of internet gag on research students pursuing research degrees at university of kashmir.

Scope of study

The Internet bar had disrupted the research work of all research scholars of Kashmir valley. It was not possible for investigators to reach all scholars who had enrolled in different academic institutions of the valley due to a shortage of time, finance and partially functioning campus with sparse visibility of researchers due the fallout of august 5, 2019 scrapping of Article 370. As a consequence, the scope of the study was restricted to research students of Kashmir University falling under the school of Business Studies, Social Sciences, Biological Sciences and Applied Sciences and Technology only.

Objectives

The current study was taken based on the following objectives:-

1. To explore the significance of the internet in education and research.
2. To ascertain the effect of internet blockade on the research of scholars.
3. To determine the zeal of doctoral students to conclude their research on fixed time by migrating or visit e-kiosks.
4. To examine the information sources preferred by research scholars in the pre-internet blockade period, and also determine how much they relied on offline library resources during the period of internet blokade.
5. To identify the research anxiety among research students due to internet suspension.

Methodology

The present study was conducted to understand the impact of internet blockade on the research scholar community of Kashmir University. The survey was used as a research method for collection of data for the present study. The methodology used can be summarized into following steps:

Step 1: After thorough review of literature a short closed-ended questionnaire was framed as per the objectives of the study.

Step 2: From the official website of Kashmir university (www.kashmiruniversity.net), among the list of schools, the faculty of Business Studies, Social Sciences, Biological Sciences, and Applied Sciences & Technology were selected. Respondent (researcher students) from select faculties were randomly considered for the study. A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed and 104 questionnaires were received back from the respondent's between 13th - 25th December 2019.

Step 3: The received questionnaires were sorted according to their respective faculties. The highest number of responses were received from Biological Sciences (33) followed by Applied Sciences & Technology (32), Social Sciences (23), and Business Studies (16). The data was tabulated from these responses and saved in MS EXCEL. The saved data was graphically
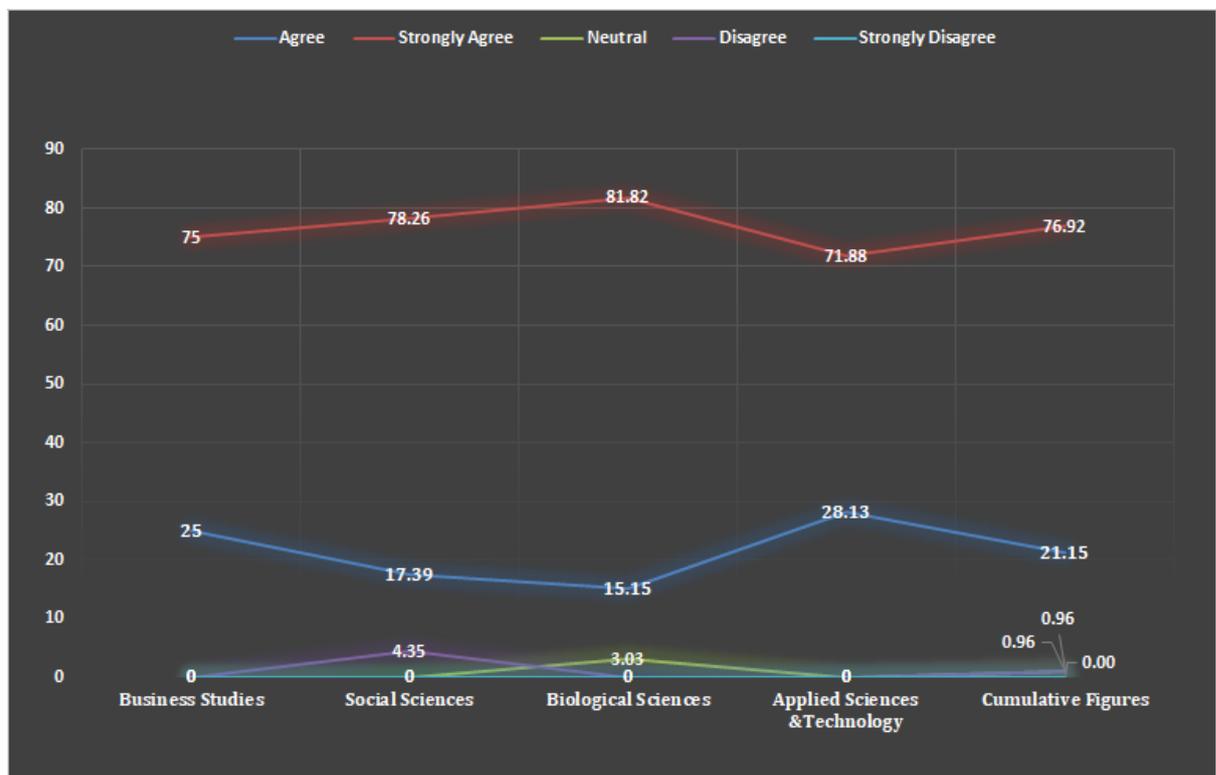
represented and interpreted as per set objectives of the study which leads to meaningful findings and conclusion.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

1. Internet Sways Education and Research

The majority of research scholars (76.92) 'Strongly Agree' with the statement that the internet is the backbone for education and research. At the faculty level, Biological Sciences leads with the highest number of respondents (81.82%) who strongly believe that the internet is the main channel of communication for a free flow of education and research, followed by Social Sciences (78.26%), Business studies (75%%%) and Applied Sciences and Technology (71.88%).

Likewise, a considerable magnitude of scholars from Applied sciences and Technology (28.13%)'Agree' that the internet is essential for the education and research followed by Business Studies (25%), Social Sciences (17.39%) and Biological Sciences (15.15%). Furthermore, a few 'neutral' responses (3.03%) have been received from Biological Sciences faculty while some respondents (4.35%) belonging to Social Sciences disagreed that the internet has an impact on the learning and exploring process and these two least numbers contributed equal proportion in cumulative figures i.e. 0.96%. The highest number respondents from the field of science strongly believe in the impact of the internet on education and research can be attributed to the fact science subjects are dynamic in nature than other subjects and get first-hand information related to their theme of study only through the internet (Graph 1).
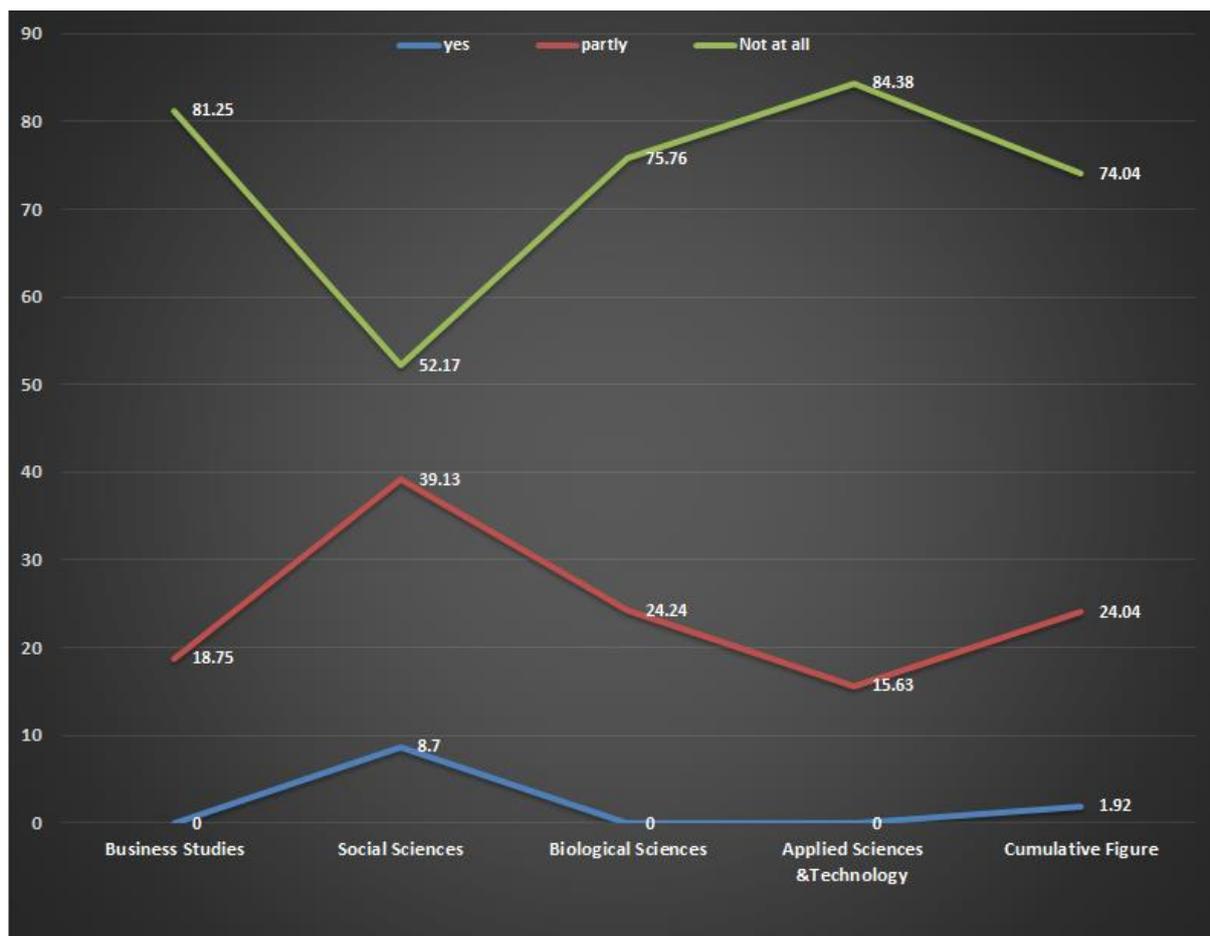

Graph 1: Internet sways education and research

2. Effects of Internet bar on research

a. Pursue Research

Researchers fetch the most relevant information related to their field of study in a few seconds just by giving keywords in search engines which is impossible in case of offline resources. It is observed that the maximum number of research scholars (74.04%) were not able to pursue their research work in absence of access to the internet. at the level of faculties, majority of Applied Sciences and Technology scholars (84.38%) is of view that the internet is a compulsory part for conducting investigation and exploration of study followed by Business Studies (81.25%), Biological Sciences (75.76%) and Social Sciences (52.17%). Around 1/4th of the scholar community (24.04%) thought that internet access is moderately important for research while a very small proportion of scholars (1.92%) are of the view that they can conduct their research without use of the internet (though such scholars solely belongs to faculty of social sciences). Graph 2 offers a lucid picture. This may be attributed to the fact that in social sciences the literature is slow when compared to sciences and as such some of research may have such outlier opinions and perspectives. Besides, the library usually possesses decent print resources in the field of social science.
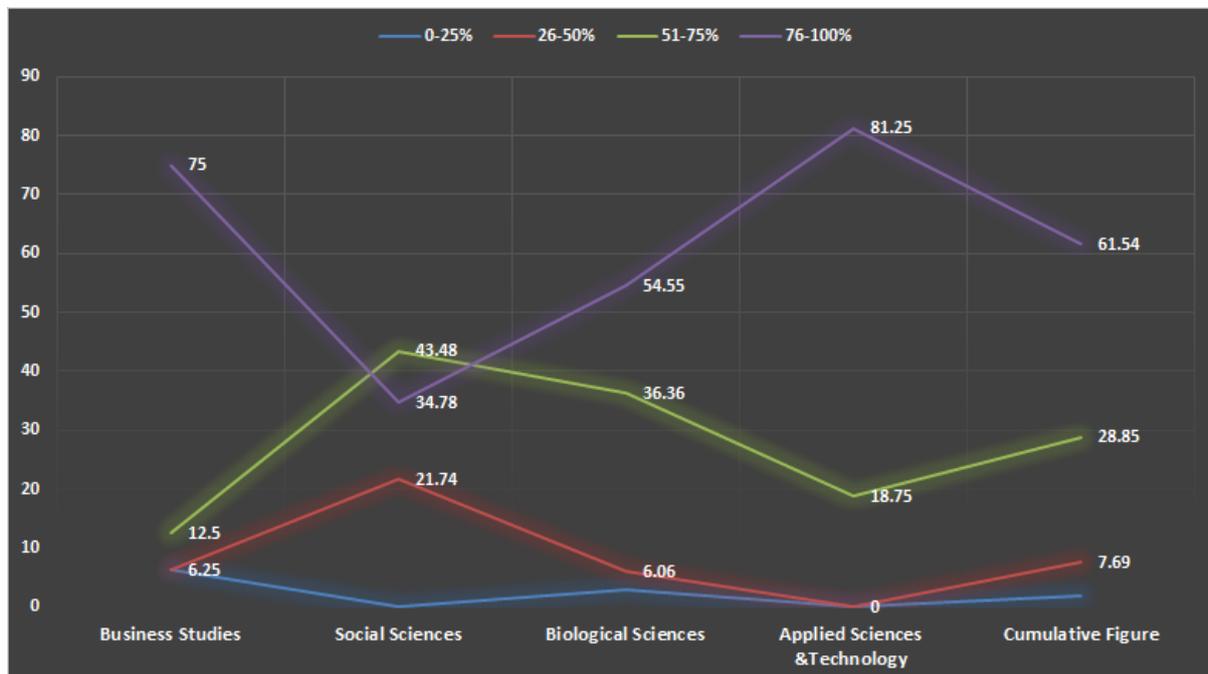

Graph 2: Effect of Internet on pursue of research

b. *Research Hampered*

The obstruction of the research work due to internet suspension is directly proportional to the dependence of researchers on the online resources and virtual academic platforms. The study depicts that internet blockade retards research work of all scholars that ranged between 1-100 percent. Observing the aggregate data, the majority (61.54%) of scholars agreed that their research work was hampered by 76-100%, while a good proportion of scholars (28.85%) agreed it affected their research work by 51-75%. Few scholars (7.69%) believed that their research work was affected by 26-50%, while meagre proportion (1.92%) believed that their research work was hindered by 0-25%.
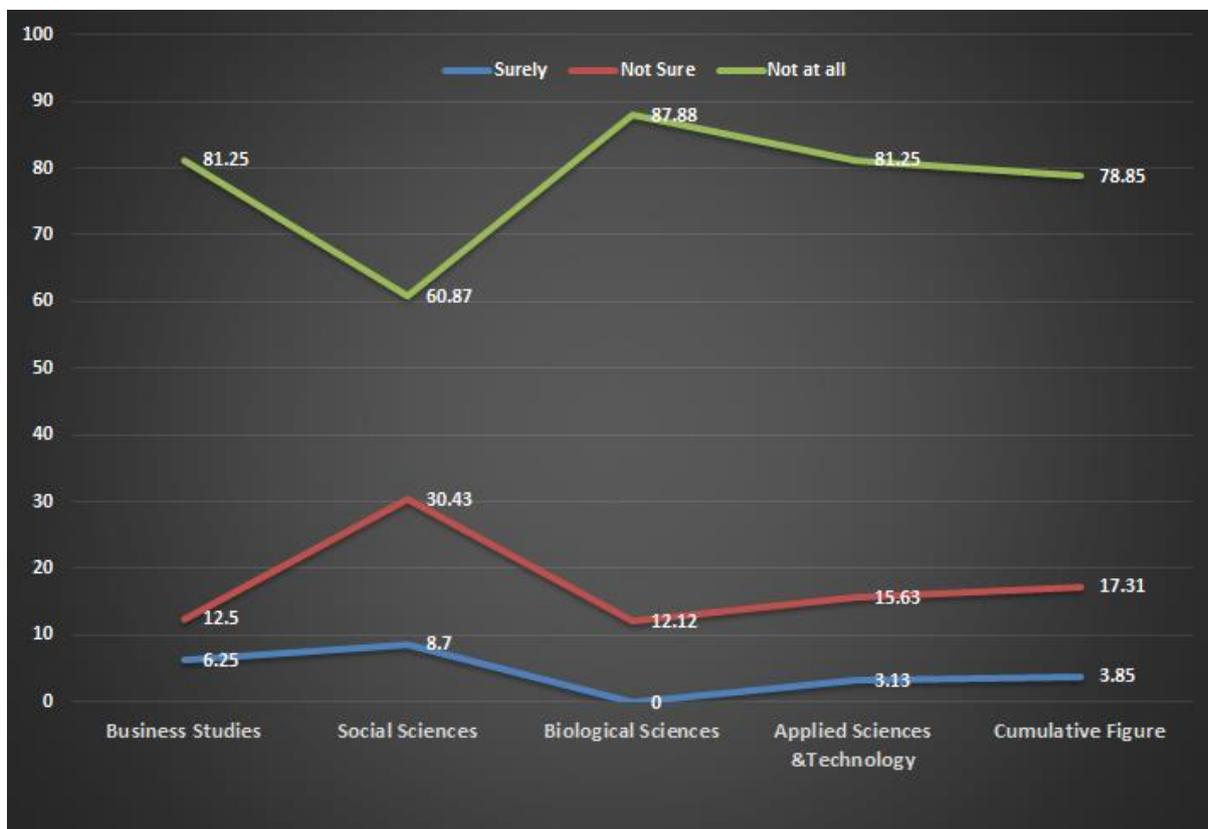
Applied Sciences & Technology seems to suffer most with the highest numbers of respondents (81.25%) falling in the category of 76-100%, followed by Business Studies (75%), Biological Sciences (54.55%) and Social sciences (34.78%). The investigation and exploration of Social science scholars showed that the majority (43.48%) of its scholars suffered from 51-75% work setback followed by Biological Sciences (36.36%), Applied Sciences & Technology (18.75%) and Business Studies (12.50%). While an average number (21.74%) of scholars from Social Science had their research disrupted by 26-50%, followed by Business Studies (6.25%) and Biological Sciences (6.06%). Lastly, the research students' whose work was least suffered (0-25%) belongs to Business Studies (6.25%) and Biological Sciences (3.03%) though the number is very low (Graph 3).

Graph 3: Research hampered due to internet blockade

c. Probability of Finishing Research in Time

Just like any other course, M.Phil. /Ph.D. has its time limit for completion. The study reveals that the majority of respondents (78.85%) are of view that they cannot complete their research in a set time due to long term and continuous internet bar though the faculty of Biological Sciences leads with (87.88%) responses, followed by Applied Sciences and Technology, and Business Studies (81.25% each) and Social Sciences (60.87%). It depicts the intense use of online resources by the researchers in the valley. The top second respondents (17.31%) are in a dilemma whether their research will finish in a set timeline or not. The highest number of such respondents (30.43%) belongs to Social Sciences faculty, which also indicates a partial dependency on the internet succeeded by Applied Sciences & Technology (15.63%), Business Studies (12.50%) and Biological Sciences (12.12%). The lesser number of the respondents from Social Sciences (8.7%), Business Studies (6.25%), and Applied Sciences & Technology (3.13%) show no dependency on the internet or may be their research is about to finish. These faculties together contributed to a minor share 3.85% in aggregate (Graph 4).

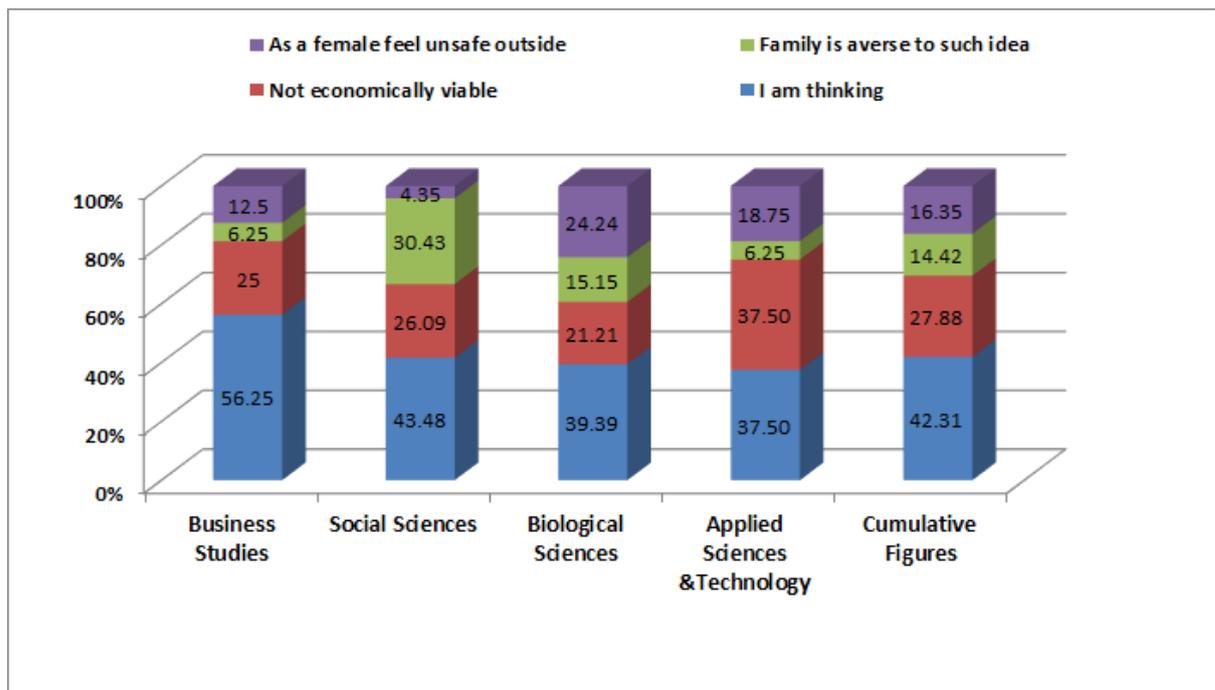*Graph 4: Probability of finishing research in time*

3. Complete research on time

a. Availing Internet Services by Migration

To retain work pace and complete research in a fixed period, some respondents migrated to mainland India to avail internet. The study also tried to have insight into the conditions that

hindered scholars from migration. It was observed, most of scholars (42.31%) are considering migration for academic sake, while reasonable number of scholars (27.88%) are not economically sound to carry out such a migration, besides some female scholars (16.35%) do not feel safe outside their hometown and families of small number of scholars (14.42%) are averse to such decision.

Observing data at faculty level, scholars from faculty of Business Studies (56.25%) lead in such initiative (migration) followed by Social Sciences (43.48%), Biological Sciences (39.39) and Applied Sciences & Technology (37.50%). A good number of Applied Sciences & Technology respondents (37.50%) cannot afford to go outside Kashmir succeeded by Social Sciences (26.09%), Business Studies (25%) and Biological Sciences (21.21%) as economic disparity prevail in our society. Some female respondents feel unsafe outside their hometown in which Biological Sciences faculty leads (24.24%) with such responses followed by Applied Sciences & Technology (18.75%), Business Studies (12.50%) and Social Sciences with least number of responses (4.35%). Lastly, few respondents were not permitted by their families to travel to other places in which the faculty of Social Sciences (30.4%3) leads followed by Biological Sciences (15.15%), Business Studies and Applied Sciences & Technology with the same number of responses (6.2%5) (Graph 5).
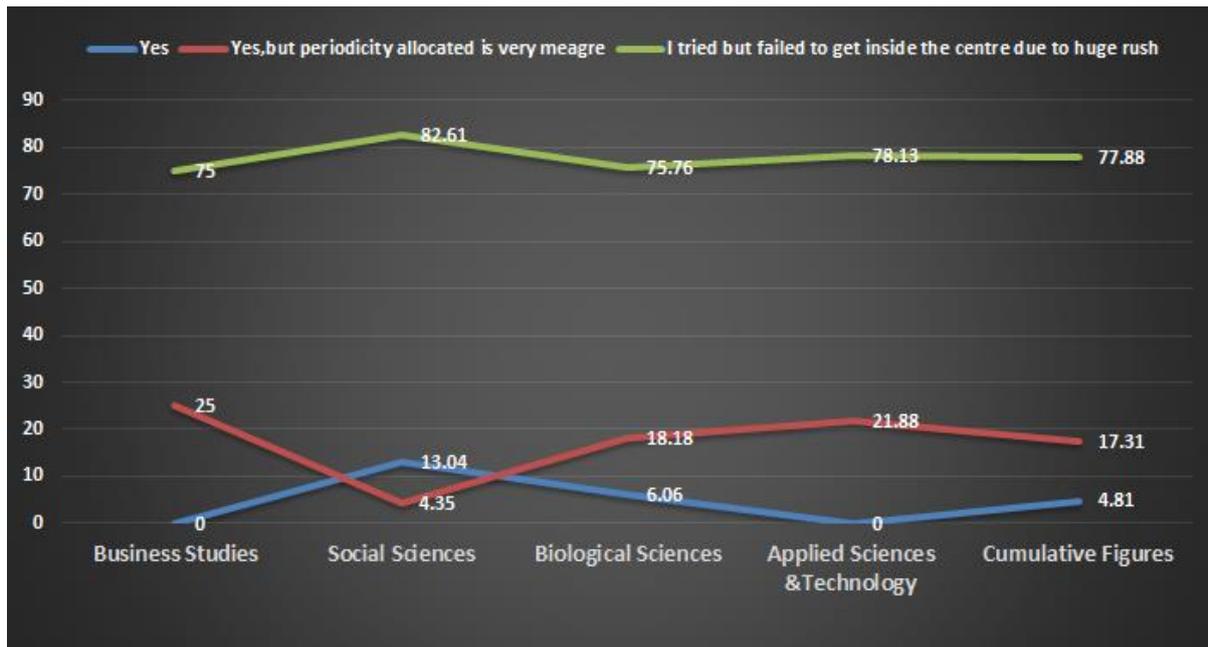

Graph 5: Availing internet facility by migration

b. *Availing Internet Through Internet Kiosks*

The internet was suspended in the erstwhile state of J&K due to political reasons. Meanwhile, the government established some internet kiosks at several places to accomplish the needs of the population. The majority of respondents (77.88%) failed to avail internet services due to huge rush outside the centres with a maximum number of such respondents belongs to Social Sciences faculty (82.61%) followed by Applied Sciences & Technology (78.13%), Biological

Sciences (75.76%) and Business Studies (75%). Some scholars (17.31) got a chance to surf the internet but it was impossible to search, retrieve and download all requisite information related to their study in a single or few visits due to meagre time allocated at internet kiosks. Among such research scholars who availed internet access from internet kiosks Business Studies (25%) lead, followed by Applied Sciences & Technology (21.88%), Biological Sciences (18.18) and Social Sciences (4.35). Furthermore, the least number of Scholars (4.81%) get a chance to access the internet and are satisfied with the allotted scanty time the scholars belonging to faculties of Social Sciences (13.04%) and Biological Sciences (6.06%) are the only supporters. (Graph 6).
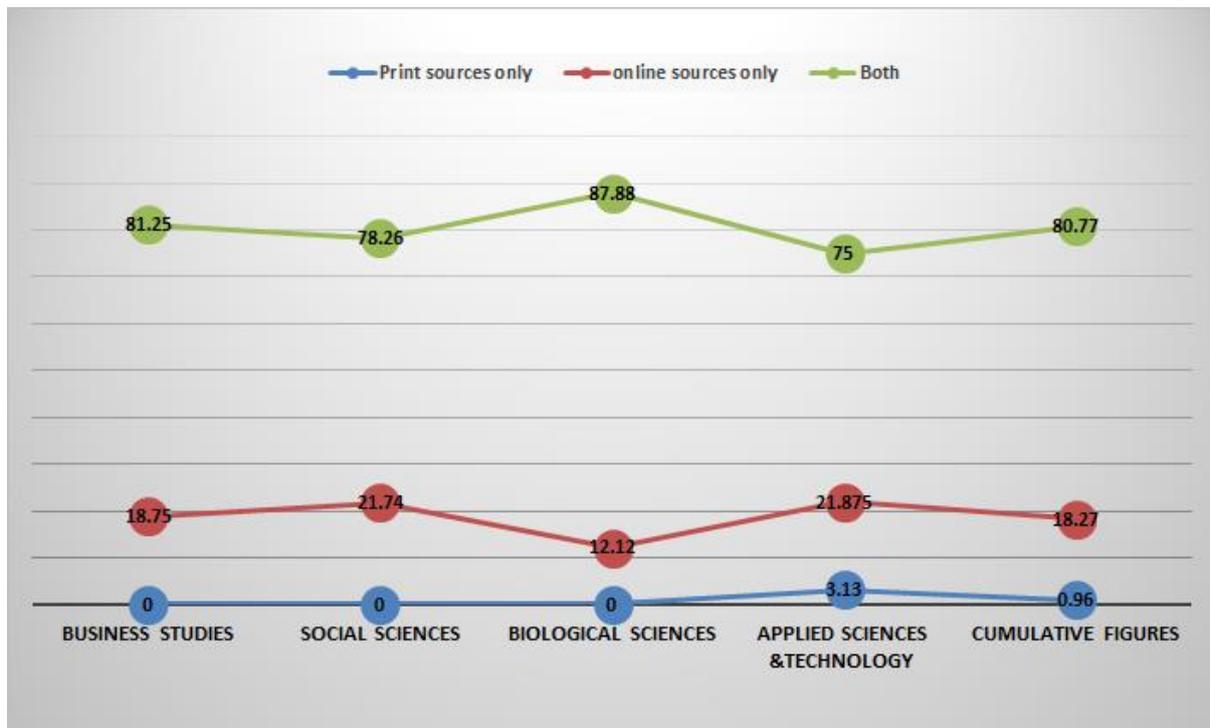

Graph 6: Availing internet facility by visiting e-kiosks

B. *Preferred Sources for Research in Pre and During internet bar Period*

1. *Print and Online Resources*

Research Scholars try to consult all types of resources available in offline and online mode related to their research study. The highest proportion of scholars (80.77%) preferred both sources of information succeeded by online sources only (18.27%), and a very small ratio of researchers (0.96%) depends on print sources only. At the faculty level, the maximum number of Biological Sciences researchers (87.88%) depends on scholarly literature procured or subscribed by the library and open access resources available on the internet followed by Business Studies (81.25%), Social Sciences (78.26%) and Applied Sciences & Technology (75%). The Applied Sciences & Technology researchers (21.87%) completely depend on online sources for the reason that it provides new and nascent information related to study followed by Social Sciences (21.74%), Business Studies (18.7%5) and Biological Sciences
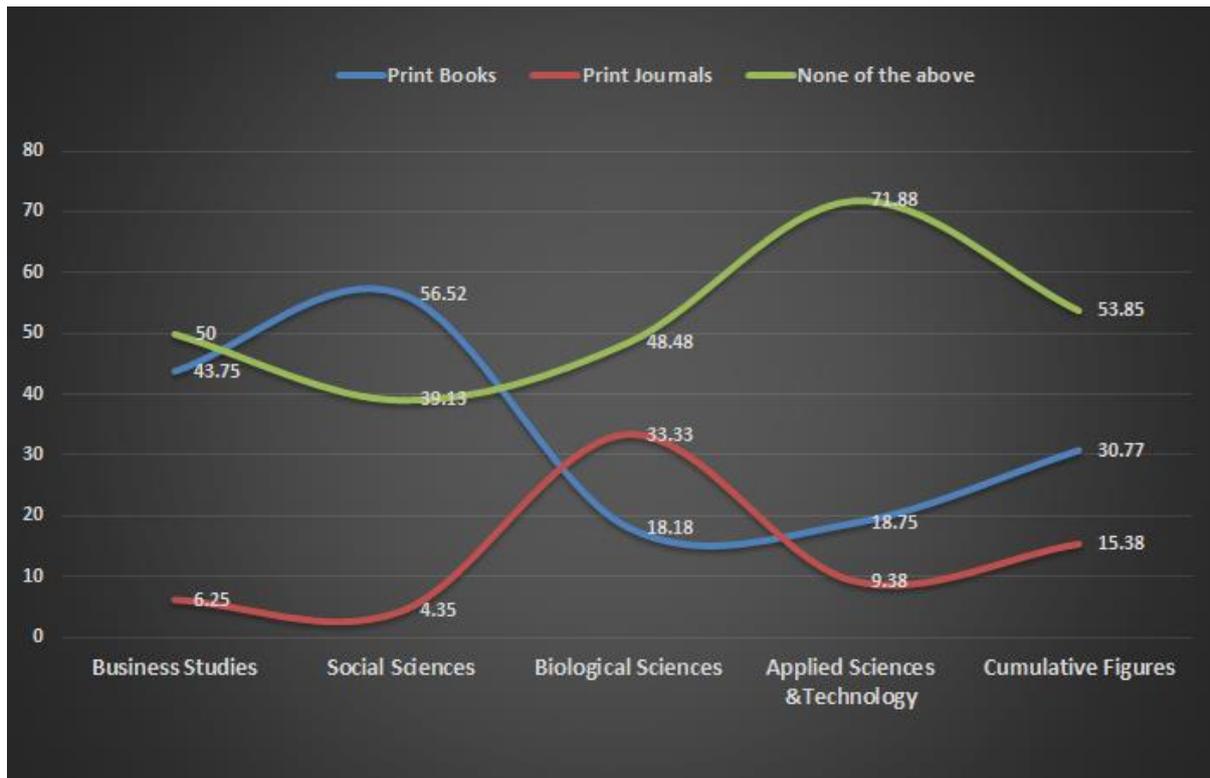
(12.12%). Lastly, the library print resources satisfy the research need of few Applied Sciences & Technology respondents (3.13%) only (Graph 7).

Graph 7: Preferred information sources before Internet blockade

2. *Validation of Library Procured Print Resources*

Libraries can cater to the information needs of their users. In the absence of the internet, the patrons depend on print resources possessed by the library. The majority of the researcher (53.85%) finds that by and large existing resources of the library are not current and comprehensive. the majority of such scholars belong to the faculty of Applied Sciences & Technology (71.88%) followed by Business Studies (50%), Biological Sciences (48.48%) and Social Sciences (39.13%). However, 30.77% of research scholars frequently used print books during this tenure in which Social Sciences tops (56.52%) followed by Business Studies (43.75%), Applied Sciences & Technology (18.75%) and Biological Sciences (18.18%). While a sizable number of scholars (15.38%) accessed subscribed print journals of a library the majority of such researchers belonged to the faculty of Biological Sciences (33.33%) followed by Applied Sciences & Technology (9.38%), Business Studies (6.25%) and Social Sciences (4.35%). Graph 8.
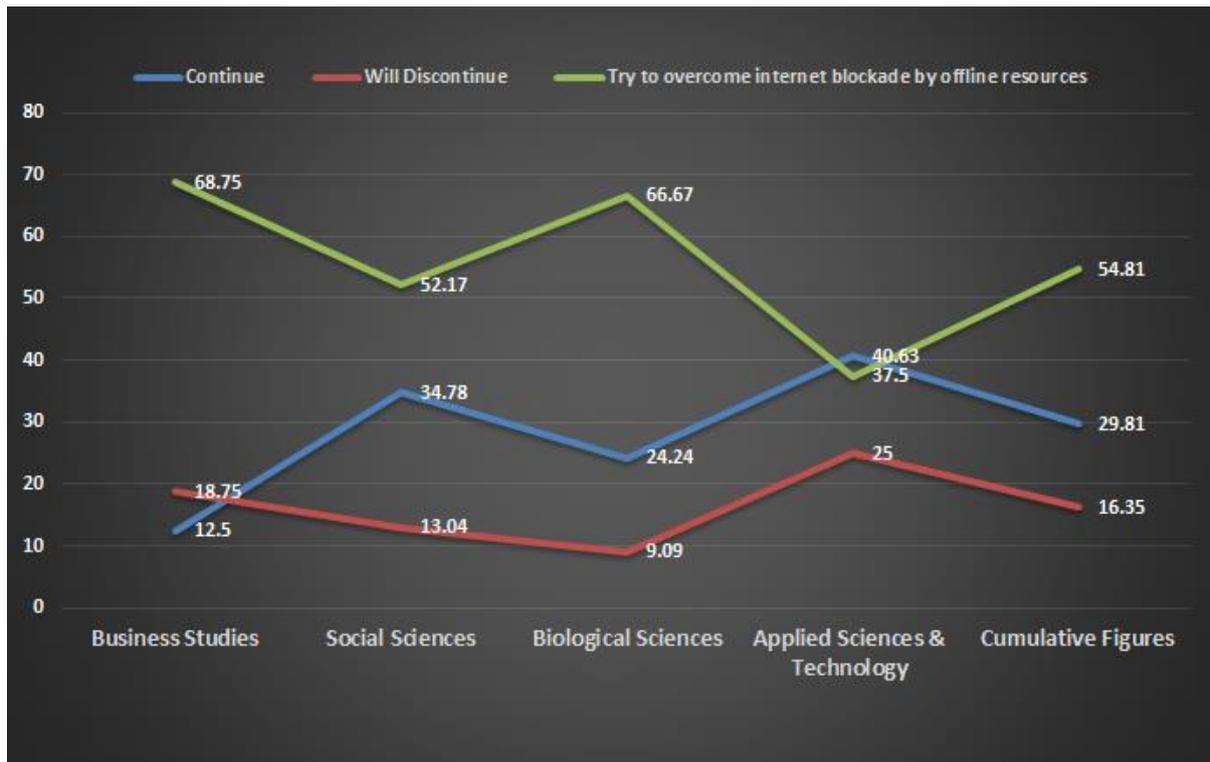
Graph 8: Validity of library procured print resources

3. Research Anxiety

Political uncertainty, communication blockade, and clampdowns have an adverse effect on people's psychology. This usually makes them give up their goals and missions. But It was observed majority of research scholars (54.81%) are resolute and want to continue their research without the internet by staying in their hometown and consult offline resources The maximum research scholars with this resolve belonged to the faculty of Business Studies (68.75%) followed by Biological Sciences (66.67%), Social Sciences (52.17%) and Applied Sciences & Technology (37.5%).

While a good chunk of research scholars (29.81%) intend to continue their research by grabbing all possible opportunities available locally. Such research scholars are found highest in the faculty of Applied Sciences & Technology (40.63%), followed by Social Sciences (34.78%), Biological Sciences (24.24%) and Business Studies (12.50%). However, a sizable number of researchers (16.35%) feel their work is hampered badly without the internet. They find no alternative sources for proceeding their research and want to discontinue. The highest number of such scholars were found in the faculty of Applied Sciences & Technology faculty lead (25%) followed by Business Studies (18.75%), Social Sciences (13.04%) and Biological Sciences (9.09%) (Graph 9).

Graph 9: Research anxiety/ effect of Internet blockade on researchers

Findings and conclusion

The world is changing from tradition to a hi-tech system where daily routine to professional work of an individual is depending on the internet. The dependency on the internet increases with the growth of networks as it satisfies the information needs of millions of users at a time. The researchers (76.92%) believed that the internet is the backbone for the 21st-century world as it provides an immense range of services for education and research. The Internet is a 24X7 service available for its customers at a nominal charge which can be accessed by any portable device. It is used for doing e-learning which becomes a gateway for formal, informal education, and creates a lifelong learning opportunity. The educational institutions are well equipped with smart classrooms and e-labs. The learners and teachers use online material to prepare for various competitive exams and class lectures. It is considered a key channel for scholarly literature where traditional, new, and nascent information related to the theme of the study is available freely or low cost, in abundance for researchers. The Scholars (74.04%) required incessant internet access for conducting their research which begins with selecting a title to the final publication of theses/ dissertations.

The University of Kashmir research community faced a lot of barriers while conducting research due to internet blockade on all platforms. The long term and continuous internet suspension hampered research extremely (76-100%). It is difficult for researchers (78.85%) to complete their research in the fixed timeline in such conditions, which result in delay in degrees and ultimately ruins career opportunities for researchers. The researchers need to remain

abreast about the new developments in their respective fields which cannot be achieved through print resources and thus also helps to avoid the repetition of the work. An online resource also removes the geographical barriers and also free communication of the scholarly world.

The enormous Kashmiri population with diverse needs is depending on the internet. In this view, the government set up e- kiosks at various places in Kashmir during the internet crisis. The established internet kiosks witnessed the long queues of people, where (77.88%) researchers failed to get inside the centre and surf the internet. Access to the internet services through migration, would have helped the reasonable number of research scholars (42.31%) to retain their work pace and complete research in a set time. But the second major proportions of researchers (27.88%) are not economically feasible to access internet services by migrating. As such, the scholars were left with the option of print sources available in libraries.

The Library delivers authentic and reliable information sources, which are considered as a foundation for real research. The library subscribes and procures print or e-resources for their patron that is why 80.77% scholars prefer both sources of information before internet suspension. The researchers discovered that existing resources are not current and comprehensive. The research needs up to date information provided by e-resources of libraries or search engines. Thus, libraries should maintain a more comprehensive collection and should keep the downloaded copies of e-materials wherever possible, so that can be made available to students during such turmoil.

The political turmoil, complete lockdown, and internet suspension shatter all sectors of the society in Kashmir, especially education and research. The unrest has a grave psychological impact on Kashmiri netizens, which depart them from their goals. The maximum number of researchers (54.81%) tried to focus on their research by using available offline resources while residing in Kashmir. The second major figure of the researchers (29.81%) continued their research by grabbing all the possible opportunities i.e., by visiting internet facilitation centres, migrate/ visit frequently to other places or take library membership outside Kashmir. Moreover, the reasonable number of research scholars (16.35%) want to discontinue their research that hits badly without the internet and finds no other alternative sources which can be used to run their research smoothly.

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